Punjab, Lakshadweep and Chandigarh. Each visit is concluded with a Statement of Conclusions jointly signed with the Chief Minister of the State concerned, laying out the points of action on which the State would move to operationalise the recommendations of the Round Tables.

An exercise is underway to review different statues with a view to harmonise them with the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution. Similarly, the guidelines of Centrally Sponsored Schemes are being reviewed to ensure the centrality of Panchayats in planning and implementation. As regards new Centrally Sponsored Schemes, it is proposed to provide for a central role for Panchayats wherever relevant. Thus, for example, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act provides for the Panchayats to be the "Principal authorities" for the planning and implementation of schemes under the Act. The Central Ministries have also been requested to undertake an exercise in activity mapping to delineate what should be done at the central, state and Panchayat levels. Steps are also being taken to fill in critical gaps in infrastructure and capacity building so that Panchayats can effectively fulfill their constitutional role.

Prosecution of public servants

2783. DR. BIMAL LALJAN:
DR. P. C. ALEXANDER:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases that are awaiting Government's permission for prosecuting public servants in corruption cases;

(b) the cases out of them which are pending for more than one year;

(c) whether Government realize that long delays in sanctioning prosecution would often result in defeating the objectives of fighting corruption among public servants; and

(d) if so, the action proposed to be taken to expedite disposal of pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) As on 30-4-2006, 90 cases for according prosecution sanction were pending with various Ministries/Departments of the Central Government and State Governments.

(b) Out of these 90 cases, 7 cases are pending for more than one year.

(c) and (d) It has been the endeavor of the Government to get the cases for sanction for prosecuting public servants considered expeditiously. Each case is examined by the authorities concerned and decided on merits at the earliest possible. Central Vigilance Commission have issued guidelines to be followed by Ministries/Departments in this regard. The Departments of Personnel and Training has also advised all the Ministries/Departments to ensure strict compliance of the guidelines so as to avoid delay in issuance of sanction for prosecution.

Functioning of Central Information Commissioners

2784. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that all the four Central Information Commissioners, as mandated by the Right to Information Act are based in Delhi;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) what is the system of disposal of the appeal, since the appellant cannot afford to keep making visits to Delhi, if the hearings are postponed; and

(d) the number of cases received and disposed by these Commissioners till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Section 12(7) of the Right to Information Act, 2005 provides that the Headquarters of the Central Information Commission (CIC) shall be at Delhi and the CIC may, with the previous approval of the Central Government, establish offices at other places in India. The CIC has not yet proposed for establishing offices at other places.

(c) According to Rule 7(2) of the Central Information Commission (Appeal Procedure) Rules, 2005, the appellant or the complainant, as the case may be, may at his discretion at the time of hearing of the appeal or the complaint by the CIC, be present in person or through his duly authorized